

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR YVONNE B. BURKE

JANUARY 10, 2006

In September 2004, the California Legislature enacted SB 855, which created in seven (7) Northern California counties a separate State Community Care Licensing category to regulate Crisis Nurseries. Under this category, State-licensed Crisis Nurseries operate with modified staffing levels, including volunteers, for the short-term residential care and supervision of children, ages 0 to 6, placed there due to a crisis or stressful situation. Up to two-thirds of a Crisis Nursery population may be composed of children voluntarily placed by a parent or guardian for no more than 30 days; and up to one-third of the population may be composed of children placed by a child welfare agency for no more than 14 days. In view of the needs of Los Angeles County's chronically homeless population, as well as the County's acute needs should a natural disaster occur, the development of Crisis Nurseries across Los Angeles County could be an additional means by which to stabilize families in need.

The Board instructed County staff to develop a team to provide services for families in Skid Row, co-lead by the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Public Social Services (DPSS). The Team will be responsible for Skid Row

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outreach, with the goal of assuring child safety and providing ongoing case management. DCFS, through its' Family Preservation Program, will first offer services. Refusal of services might trigger a safety assessment for the child. DCFS must not criminalize poverty, and yet these vulnerable children deserve a safe place to sleep. The addition of Crisis Nurseries to the battery of available services could be a valuable tool in addressing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Instruct the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services to report back in 180 days on the feasibility of developing in Los Angeles County, a series of "Crisis Nurseries", State-licensed nurseries that operate with modified staffing levels, including volunteers, for the short-term residential care and supervision of children, ages 0 to 6, placed there due to a crisis or stressful situation such as homelessness.